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A VOICE FROM THE FAR EAST

FOR PRINCETON MEN

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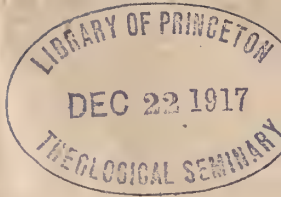
The Princeton University Center.

Peking, China, Oct. 19, 1917.

To the Alumni of Princeton
University :—

Ever since Princeton began to have a definite interest in China we have been greatly gratified at the way Princeton alumni have responded to the opportunity for some practical lines of Christian work in China. Of course, personally, I have been trying to represent the interests of Princeton undergraduates and alumni in the work which I have been doing for the past twenty years, and consider it a great honor to be thus so intimately connected with such a worthy enterprise of our Alma Mater ; and we men of Princeton in Peking, now numbering eight when all here, consider such a practical form of work as the Young Men's Christian Association, established here in the uttermost parts of the earth, as indeed a thing for Princeton to be proud of.

It was in 1906 that the larger undertaking to have a definite Center in China at which Princeton men



could be located, where the work that they would do would adequately represent the life and spirit of the University, was begun. During these past ten years of the more formal organization of the work known as "The Princeton Work in Peking," reports and letters or other printed matter have been sent to those directly in charge of this work at Princeton, who, in turn, have made use of them in one form or another, and distributed them to various alumni throughout the United States. Now for the first time it is the hope and purpose of the Princeton Committee to make possible a more direct communication and interchange of letters, possibly, with alumni in America interested in the work. I am therefore attempting to send to you the first letter which I hope you will receive and find in it something that will bring you into more direct contact with what Princeton is trying to do here in China. We cannot expect you, of course, to personally answer these letters, but that is not saying that we would not be delighted to hear from you and have you give us the benefit of your suggestion and help in connection

with anything that may be touched upon in our letters or in regard to any phase of the work which we are undertaking here in Peking.

Before the work was organized in its present form, that is, working under the auspices and through the agency of the Young Men's Christian Association, there was a good opportunity for a distinct educational work that Princeton might have undertaken in China. Several other American colleges have since undertaken educational work; such as, Yale at Changsha, Oberlin in Shansi, University of Pennsylvania in Canton, and Harvard in medical work. It would have been a splendid thing for Princeton also to have launched a work which would contribute to the educational development of the Chinese people. After these ten years of the more formally organized work under the auspices and through the agency of the Young Men's Christian Association as well as through my longer contact with it, I am still convinced that we have, in the organization with which we have identified ourselves, and through which we are doing our work, a better arrangement for a larger

opportunity to help China than we could have had in an educational work pure and simple. Princeton has a distinct message to give to China, and I can hardly conceive of a better platform from which to deliver it than is afforded by the Young Men's Christian Association. We are not to judge exactly what Princeton is doing for China through the Association by what we know of the Young Men's Christian Association in America, great as that may be. In this period of transition, no matter from what point of view looked at, the conditions that now obtain in China seem to abundantly demand and justify the varied program of work which the Young Men's Christian Association operates.

There is just one difficulty about this program, and that is its very bigness ; it is very exacting on our strength, and our efficiency is imperilled by the tendency of being too diffuse, simply because of the lack of qualified men to direct the work that is appealing to us to be done. We cannot expect to have so many Princeton men brought out here that will be sufficient to do the work, granted that they could learn the language and become trained and

experienced, so as to do it efficiently; and on the other hand, it takes a long time to discover capable Chinese and train them in the various forms of Association work so that they can assume responsibility and leadership. Its dangers, however, do not mean that we should be discouraged or doubtful of the suitability of the Young Men's Christian Association as the means that we can best use to help China.

Think of the opportunity which is given to Princeton men here, not only to transmit and interpret the spirit of Princeton and the message of Princeton to the thousands of the young men in China, but also the opportunity that is given us to infuse that spirit into the Chinese that we hope will become the leaders in this work, and show them and help them to understand the message which Princeton has to give to China, that they in turn, will promote it among the hundreds and thousands of their fellow-countrymen.

It matters not from what angle we think of the Princeton life and all that Princeton stands for, it is a great responsibility as well as opportunity to try to do the work here in China. Princeton is primarily

and fundamentally a Christian University. Her history, her traditions, the lives of her founders, the noted men who have come out from her walls to adorn the work of the Gospel ministry, the rank and file of alumni who fill important places in commerce and government service, the strong virile Christian spirit that pervades the whole life of the University,—all these have to be called up in vision, in faith and in hope to be transmitted and interpreted to this great people here in China. The Association offers as I understand it, the most versatile and varied opportunities through which Princeton is able to give the help and do the work for the young men of China, that they specially need just now and that Princeton is eminently qualified to give.

But it is not in the terms of a platform merely, which may give rather the idea of mere speaking and talking, that the Association offers a great scope for Princeton's energy and help in China. The Association is a great social center where young men of all the important circles of society and grades meet and mingle. You ought to see the lobby of the

Association any ordinary night in the week, and you would at once be made aware of Princeton's opportunity through this one feature alone of the Young Men's Christian Association to do a great service for the Chinese young men. For I am persuaded that it is not in the magnificent building equipment, with all of its advantages to offer the young men, great as that may be, that we have our best opportunity to help these young men in Peking. It is rather in the personal contact that is made possible by the frequent meeting of groups of men in natural and easy ways that gives us men from Princeton our best chance to do what we want to do. This bringing of personality to bear upon the conditions we are in, to mingle with men who come into the environment our Association offers, can consciously as well as unconsciously give out those things which are fundamental and lasting;—this is where we consider we have one of our largest and best opportunities of helping the young men in China. It would be necessary for you to see as well as understand the social conditions which obtain in a city like Peking to enable you to appreciate just what I

am referring to, and to know how valuable is such a social center as is provided up the Young Men's Christian Association through the work Princeton is doing. I am sure that one of the great services we can give to the young men of China is just this element of personal friendship. This great service can be rendered not merely by occasional meetings or even in classroom intercourse, but rather in an institution where men can get into close intimacy, and come to know each other thoroughly well. Whilst it is true that we do not have the close social contact with all of our 1800 members, yet it is also true that we have this wholesome friendship with a great number of them. To be able to bring these young men out from the surroundings of vice in all of its insidious forms and get them to feel at home and to appreciate the value of companionship such as is found in the Association is a service that is sorely needed in this country. The Young Men's Christian Association may therefore be thought of as a great social club home in which are provided safe and sane recreation and amusements. But it not merely a social club. It is just in these

circumstances that our best opportunity lies for Princeton men, your representatives, to give to these Chinese young men the spiritual help, the friendly advice and suggestion that they need at the most formative period of their lives.

I referred above to the fact that Princeton had had the opportunity to establish an educational institution in China, but chose rather the Young Men's Christian Association as its special form of work. But the fact is that within the Association, Princeton also has its opportunity to do an educational work of no inconsiderable size. It may be that you will think of the Young Men's Christian Association, so far as its educational work is concerned, as being a place where night classes are held, and a sort of pick up kind of general education is provided. In the Young Men's Christian Association in China, we have this supplementary educational work also, and it is filling an important need; but here in Peking we have launched out into a very definite educational enterprise which I think will interest you as professional men or as business men. Seeing the great crying need of China of having the

means of preparing and training young men for occupations which will ensure them a decent livelihood, we have decided to make Vocational Training the principal line of educational work here in our Association.

We have been thinking of this special undertaking in a rather large way, but no whit larger than the need and the opportunity which is here to be met. Formerly, under the old system of education, there was but one occupation which a young Chinese could consider as a means of livelihood, and that was the official life, or what we would understand, perhaps, as political life. The whole scheme of education, the whole social system as well as the political organization, has, up to within the last six years, been headed toward this one single line of work, namely official life. Since the revolution in 1911 and the greater transformation of the social order because of that, we find that there are hosts, literally hosts, of young men who have no future ; and the consequence is, except to the very limited circle of the well-to-do who may be able to shift for themselves and keep from hunger, the

great masses of the young men of this country, not to speak of the millions whom they have dependent upon them, are face to face with a great economic pressure and crisis. In other words, they have to struggle for an existence.

Now the immediate contact with this tremendous fact, and the facing of these conditions actually prevailing around us has led us to see an opportunity within the Association, whereby we may be able to relieve some of this great pressure, and help in some way to avoid the crisis of hunger, by taking as our major educational effort, this vocational training. We have already organized the "Peking School of Commerce and Finance," with about two hundred and twenty five students. These young men are given a thorough training in those subjects which prepare them for commercial lines ; as, accountants, book-keepers and clerks in business or in governmental offices, where their training in finance and kindred subjects may be useful in fitting them for such service. We have already graduated two classes with a total of eighteen graduates. The work is being done thoroughly,

and our hope is that the graduates of this School will make a place for themselves in the commercial and financial institutions of China. There is undoubtedly a great opportunity in helping young men through such an educational institution. In addition to this training in commerce and finance, we have also in mind the Industrial and Trade School, and even, later on, we hope to do something in agriculture and rural community needs. China is essentially a country of farmers, and if we could do something to promote her practical efficiency in farming and farm products, China would certainly take a large place in supplying the markets of the world.

You doubtless would be interested in knowing something about how we do this work. As you are aware, Princeton sends her representatives to Peking, funds are collected from the alumni and undergraduates to pay their salaries and living expenses; this is Princeton's practical contribution to China. But in our work here in Peking we have over thirty Chinese employees. These Chinese are of various grades of training and experience. Their salaries, together with the actual running expenses of

the work, are provided locally from Chinese sources. The actual budget of the work to be expended this year will total over \$60,000, local silver currency. This money is raised through regular sources of income, such as membership fees, dormitory rental, restaurant, and a few other minor items of income, and about eight or nine thousand dollars from voluntary subscriptions from the Chinese. This budget, as referred to above, does not include the money which Princeton contributes for her own representatives in Peking. I think that you will see from this that the Chinese are not only interested but are willing and ready to assume a good, generous share in carrying on the work which Princeton has begun and to which she is contributing.

There is another way in which you may learn of the way in which the Association is being received in China, namely the place which Chinese leadership has in the Association here. As noted above there is some thirty odd employed staff all supported by the budget locally provided for. With the beginning of this year, 1917, the work centering in the Main Building came under

the leadership of one of our most experienced Chinese secretaries Mr. Chang Pei Chih. We consider this a real advance, and look upon it as an indication of the capacity and ability of the Chinese to undertake and do successfully this work. Looked at from the Princeton point of view, we are bound to think of Peking as the place where Princeton's representatives are engaged upon a work which they have been sent out here to do, but from the Chinese side or point of view, we are trying to think of this work not merely in the terms of Princeton energy, Princeton money, Princeton initiative, Princeton men, but also emphatically in the terms of Chinese leadership and Chinese financial support. If we are going to establish this work permanently in China, and Princeton is to have a lasting share in the achievement, we are strongly convinced that the only way to do the thing effectively is to develop Chinese leadership, men who will actually take the important, leading positions of responsibility and administration, men who are members of the Chinese Board of Directors, will have a share in the shaping and formation of the policy and

program of the Association work, so that the institution, headed by such men, either as secretaries or as directors, will commend itself to the general community for their interest and support. This is what we would achieve by establishing the Association as a permanent institution in the community. Coming as it does, primarily as a foreign institution, it is our responsibility to see to it that it is transplanted and that it takes root in Chinese soil fostered and developed by the initiative and constant support of the Chinese community, so that they will look upon it, recognize it and use it as their own, and not think of it as a foreign institution. The Young Men's Christian Association is in fact the most popular foreign-introduced institution in China. This very fact constitutes both its great opportunity and its peril. Therefore as Princeton men, trained in the life and traditions of Princeton, after some years of experience in China, knowing something of the effects of the impact of the West upon the East, we see and feel the responsibility of utilizing the Association and making the most of its opportunities to help China by training the Chinese young

men to carry the burden for themselves.

You will doubtless get the impression that our whole energy and time is devoted to work among and for the Chinese. This is true, and we are glad to have you understand that it is so. We live among the people; our homes are scattered about in the city. We make neighbors and friends among the Chinese; we give our time and thought and effort in doing all we can to help China. And yet there are other phases of life here in Peking. Your representatives are brought into contact with men of the many nationalities of the Legation quarter. Only time and strength limit the opportunity for various social ways of coming into good, friendly relationship with members of the American and European Legation communities. There is also a number of important people of different nationalities who live here in Peking engaged in business of various kinds, or who are attached to the Chinese government in some capacity, so that there is an ever-widening circle of important people that it is well for us to cultivate. There is, of course, the very important and large

Missionary community, both American and European with which we have very close and intimate intercourse and co-operation.

I should mention also the Legation guards here as an important element in our foreign community. There are approximately a thousand, of some eleven or twelve nationalities, not counting the Japanese guards, numbering about two hundred, and the present British guard consisting of Indian troops. We have been doing Association work for these European soldiers for the past seventeen years, and it is now one of the regular departments of our Association field. The American guard numbers two hundred and fifty, and of course our chief energy is devoted to the work among these American marines.

You will see from this that there is a great opportunity for your representatives to come in contact with many different kinds of people, and we feel also responsibility to form all of the helpful contacts we can with the members of the different communities so as to fulfill our duties as representatives of a great university in the best way we can.

There are at present here in the Princeton Center in Peking, besides myself, who am giving my time to the general supervision of the work of the whole field : Amos N. Hoagland, '06, who has charge of the physical work of the Association ; D. W. Carruthers, '15, who has the responsibility of work among the Legation guards ; John Stuart Burgess, '05, now on his way back from America, expected to arrive in Peking about October 24, who probably will give his attention principally to the religious work program and the social service work of the Association ; D. W. Edwards, '04, who is now in Princeton on his second furlough and will probably return early next Spring, 1918. Edwards, when in Peking, is my closest associate in the general administration of the work of the Association. There have also come out this year three new members of our Princeton colony : Walter S. Young, M.A. Princeton 1916, who is our special expert in Book-keeping and Finance in our School of Commerce and Finance ; A. B. Tyler, '18, who has come out for one year to do special teaching in our School of Commerce and Finance ; and Richard H. Ritter,

'17, whom the Princeton committee have asked to come to Peking to help in correspondence and publicity work in connection with keeping a closer relationship between Princeton men at home and our Princeton center in Peking. On account of the war several other men of the class of 1917 were hindered from coming this year, to follow up the short term service here in Peking that C. L. Heyniger, L. D. Seymour and E. B. Wall, 1916 did so splendidly, and who have now returned. We hope after the war is over to have, year by year, representatives of the graduating class come out for short terms to help in teaching or athletic work, besides affording us also a closer and more frequent contact with men actually in college.

We hope alumni, more and more, will be interested in visiting the Far East, especially China; and if any of you or your friends are coming out this way, we hope you will be free to use us in any way we can possibly assist in making your visit interesting and profitable.

Yours very sincerely,

Robert R. Gailley